

When retrapped on 23 February it was certainly not capable of more than local flights, owing to its moult. It still remains to be seen where the main population of the River Warbler winters.

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Multiple original spellings of *Bradypterus* Swainson, 1837 by C. W. Benson, R. K. Brooke & Melvin A. Traylor

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The generic name of *Bradypterus* has long been used for a widespread group of tropical old world warblers (Sylviidae), most of which frequent the dense edges of forests where they are difficult to study. Their generic name is almost invariably attributed to Swainson (1837, *On the Natural History and Classification of Birds* 2: 241). However, a re-examination of this text while framing a catalogue of the type specimens in the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, showed that the name that Swainson proposed was *Bradyptetus* (Greek for slow flier) and that *Bradypterus* (Greek for slow wing) only appears in the index on p. 379. The problem was expanded, since the name Swainson gave in his own handwriting on the type specimen of the genotype is *Bradypetes platyurus* (actually a junior synonym of *Sylvia baboecala* Vieillot, 1817: 172). *Bradypetes* also means slow flier in Greek, but, being a cheironym, has no standing in zoological nomenclature. The next author to allude to the genus was Gray (1840, *A List of the Genera of Birds*: 20), who called it *Bradypterus* Swains. without comment, a practice which has been followed almost universally ever since.

We are the first workers to set out this case of multiple original spellings, and in the light of Recommendation 24A of the International Code of

Zoological Nomenclature we select *Bradypterus* as the correct original spelling of the generic name that Swainson erected for his species *platyurus* (= *Sylvia baboecala* Vieillot, 1817), since this is the form almost universally used, and despite its inappropriateness and publication in an index.

We are obliged to Mr. R. V. Melville, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, for advice on how to proceed in this case.

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The interorbital septum in cardueline finches

by R. L. Zusi

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The Carduelinae (*sensu* Howell, Paynter & Rand *in* Peters 1968) are a well-defined group of finches that differ from other finches in various aspects of their anatomy and behaviour (for discussion and references see Mayr *et al.* 1956, Ziswiler 1965, Ackermann 1967). Some of the genera presently included in the Carduelinae have been little studied and are placed in that subfamily because of their external similarity to better-known carduelines, or because of their geographical distribution. This paper deals with the interorbital septum of the skull as a clue to the relationships of some controversial genera. Because the septum can be seen in most museum skins by removal of cotton from the eye or by radiographs, it can be studied in species for which anatomical specimens are not available.

The conformation of the interorbital septum in species known to be cardueline differs consistently from that in conical-billed species known to be non-cardueline. To evaluate species of controversial affinity I have assumed that those with the cardueline type of septum belong in that subfamily, or within another group derived from the Carduelinae. Use of a single character for tentative taxonomic conclusions is here justified by the apparent consistency of the character and by the lack of other strong evidence for some species.

For this study I have examined skeletons of heavy-billed or broad-billed forms in a wide variety of passerine families and subfamilies, including the Thraupinae, Tersiniinae, and Icteridae, and most of the genera (from Peters 1962, 1968, 1970) of the following (the number of genera *not* studied is given after each taxon): Emberizinae (-17), Catamblyrhynchinae (-0), Cardinalinae (-2), Drepanididae (-5), Fringillinae (-0), Carduelinae (-0), Estrildidae (-9), Viduinae (-0), Bubalornithinae (-0), Passerinae (-2), Ploceinae (-1). I use the word "finch" broadly to include conical-billed members of these groups.

The interorbital septum is the median partition lying between the eyes, extending from the brain case forward to the ectethmoid bones. In most finches there is a fenestra in the anterior cranial wall above each optic foramen. When the bony septum is complete, these cranial fenestrae are